

S P E E C H

OF

M R. H A M E R, O F O H I O,

OF

R E S O L U T I O N O F M R. W I S E,

P R O P O S I N G

A N I N Q U I R Y I N T O T H E C O N D I T I O N

OF

E X E C U T I V E D E P A R T M E N T S.

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SPEECH.

House of Representatives, January 5, 1837—
On a resolution, offered by Mr. WISE of Virginia, for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of the Executive Departments of the Government.

MR. SPEAKER: It is a fact well known to every gentleman who has been an observer of the signs of the times for a few years past, that the speeches delivered here have considerable effect upon the public mind. It is right that they should. The members sent here are presumed to have some knowledge of the nature of our Government, of the interests of the country, and of the manner in which the Government is administered. What they publicly declare, under such circumstances, in their places, under official and personal responsibilities, deserves to have an influence upon their own immediate constituents, and upon the public at large.

For three years past I have frequently listened to speeches, made by gentlemen in the opposition, which I thought, at the time, deserved replies. Others thought differently, and they were permitted to pass unnoticed. Some of these speeches contained the slang and falsehoods of letter-writers and unprincipled editors, polished and ended by the orator, and sent out to poison and lead the public mind with regard to those who are in power.

Some of us have thought we ought not to answer them, because it would occupy too much time. It was believed that we ought to transact public business, and go home. I am as much opposed to the long desultory debates that occur here, involving the Presidential and every other question before the country, as any one else. We say these things so far, that it has been remarked by more than one intelligent citizen, that the House of Representatives was becoming a mere debating society—a club for the discussion of political questions. My opinion is, that we ought to transact the public business, and then, if we have time to spare, let us debate these topics. The affairs of our constituents should be first attended to. It was for that they sent us here, and when the duty is discharged, it is time enough to engage in making political harangues. But instead of this, we waste the commencement and the close of the session—nay, almost the whole period—with such debates, and near the close of it we pass up and pass some fifty or a hundred bills; debate a hundred more, without much examination, and then adjourn. This, in my estimation, is

all wrong. But what is to be gained by our remaining silent? If we do not debate, the opposition will. The time is consumed, and the vocabulary of our language ransacked for opprobrious epithets, to be heaped upon the Executive, upon this House, and upon the constituents who sustain both. Corruption, fraud, tyrant, usurper, slaves, are familiar terms here.

These charges are made day after day, and remain uncontradicted, to go out to the country and circulate among the people. Are these charges true or false? That "silence gives consent" is an old maxim, which has much truth in it. The frequent repetition of these charges by the opposition, and the silence of the friends of the administration, will induce some portion of the country to believe them. If they are true, we ought to admit them; if not, we should pronounce them false. So far as I know or believe, they are false, and I therefore pronounce them so before the country.

No one word is heard oftener in our debates here, than the word "Party!" The opposition gentlemen seem to be peculiarly fond of it. They are constantly appealing to us to disregard party considerations, and go for the country!

There are parties in all free Governments. They arise from a difference of opinion among men in regard to the policy to be pursued by those who are entrusted with administration of public affairs. Candidates, holding to opposite principles, present themselves for public favor, and the people decide between them. In other countries, especially in England, one party is said to be out of power, and the other in, as the one or the other may happen to be successful. It was formerly so here. At one time the Federal party was in power, and at another time the Republican or Democratic party. But for a few years past a different mode of expression has been adopted. The opposition claim to be "THE COUNTRY," and denounce us as "a party!" We, who have been in power for eight years, we, who elect the President and sustain him and his administration, by the votes of a large majority of the American people; we, forsooth, are "a party," whilst a minority, struggling in vain to obtain the control of the Government, impudently claim to be the country!

Now, there never can be a universal concurrence of opinion with respect to public men and public measures; and when the question has been fairly presented to the people, and a majority decide either one way or the other, that decision is virtually the voice of the country. Such a deci-

sion has been made. It was announced in 1828, and has remained unreversed until this time. We are the country, and have been during all that period. If there are either "parties," or "factions," in the case, they are to be found among those who manifest violent and persevering opposition to the will of the majority; a will so distinctly and repeatedly expressed by the sovereign people of the United States.

I have no disposition to fight the Presidential campaign over again upon this floor: to imitate the old soldier, who shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won. But as *reviewing* seems to be the order of the day, and it has become very unfashionable to speak to the subject before the House, I will look back to some of the topics which have been introduced into this debate, as well as others that have taken place here.

It has been quite common for the last three years to hear the President pronounced a usurper, and a tyrant. Grecian, Roman and English history have all been put in requisition, and carefully examined, from beginning to end, for the purpose of finding parallels and illustrations of his cruelty, tyranny and usurpation. It is an easy matter to make these comparisons, and to call hard names. It requires very little talent and less reading. But gentlemen should remember that declamation is not argument; and that assertion is not proof. If these parallels are just, it must be within the power of those who use them, to point to the facts which render the President obnoxious to the charges preferred against him. Why are they not given? In what point has he violated either law or constitution? Let them point to the instance, and give us the circumstances. General, indiscriminate condemnation will not satisfy the American people. When the cases are specified, it will be matter for investigation and argument whether they sustain the accusations so confidently made by his antagonists. Until then I, for one, shall consider it as mere idle declamation.

I do not stand here to pronounce a eulogium upon the President. His acts are before his countrymen, and they have already, in the presence of his accusers, rendered a verdict of unqualified approbation upon his public career. What motive can he have to infringe upon the liberties of his fellow citizens, or to overturn the constitution of his country? None. His countrymen have conferred upon him every favor in their gift, and he has attained the highest station which human power can bestow. From that station he is about to retire, leaving his country happy and prosperous beyond example, and attended by the benedictions of a just and grateful people.

But I will not enter upon his defence. If I were inclined to do so, under other circumstances, I have been saved the necessity of discharging this duty, by the able and eloquent speech of my friend from Indiana, (Mr. Hannegan,) who has just taken his seat. He has treated this subject so much more ably than I could hope to do, that I will not attempt to tread upon the ground he has already occupied.

Can any one fail to see why it is that these unfounded charges are so often repeated? Those who have studied the nature of the human mind,

are aware of the influence made upon it by repeated blows, followed up from time to time with untiring perseverance. This everlasting hammering in the same place will ultimately produce its effect upon the hardest material; and assaults made upon individual character, whether public or private, from day to day, for a series of years, if uncontradicted, will finally gain credence, even among a man's friends. This is the secret of the merciless warfare which has been carried on against President Jackson.

Another fruitful topic of discussion with the opposition, is the inconsistency of the President and his friends in regard to the great questions of policy that have been agitated before the country for some years past. The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Robertson) has adverted to this contrariety of opinion.

[Mr. ROBERTSON arose, and said the gentleman from Ohio had misapprehended him. He did not speak of the differences of principle among the friends of the administration. He had said nothing of the terrible federalists they had in their ranks, nor of the discordant materials that composed their party; but he had attempted to show that the President was inconsistent with himself; that, from his own acts and communications, he might be claimed as the friend or the enemy of the tariff, internal improvements, the bank, &c. &c.]

Mr. H. said he accepted the gentleman's statement with pleasure; he had no doubt misapprehended the tenor of his observations. But he would tell the gentleman, that with regard to "terrible federalists," if he wanted to find them of the real black cockade stamp of 1800, he might readily do so, and that in great numbers, among his own political associates. He believed the gentleman had never belonged to that school; but there were many of them among those who co-operate with him against the administration. The old black cockade party, and their regular descendants and successors, who held the same doctrine formed no small portion of the opposition. Loc said he at Massachusetts, so highly complimented the other day by the honorable gentleman from South Carolina, (Mr. Pickens,) and you may then see on what side the remnant of the old federalists of '98 are to be found.

On this subject of the tariff, as well as upon several others, there is an old proverb, which can recommend to the consideration of gentlemen the opposition. I know it is said by Lord Chesterfield and others, to be rather vulgar quote proverbs; but I confess I like them. Proverbs are usually the result of the accumulated experience of successive generations of men. Nineteen cases out of twenty, they are true. If their truth which preserves them; if false, they would be forgotten. The one to which I allude is, that "those who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones."

Do we differ in regard to the doctrine of a protective tariff? Pray, what are the sentiments the opposition upon this subject? Have they a principle in common with regard to protection? What is it? Ask the nullifiers; the people; what is called (and I think she has earned the title)

here, if nowhere else) the gallant little State of South Carolina. Why, sir, it is but a short time since they were willing to peril every thing, Union itself, rather than submit to a protective tariff—to a “bill of abominations.” They deny the power of Congress to pass any such law, and hold all such enactments to be open violations of the constitution. But what say the opposition in the North and the West? What are the sentiments of the “American system” men on this subject? They believe that the Federal Government not only has the authority to pass such laws, but that it is a solemn duty we owe our country to afford them this protection. These are the gentlemen who are so grievously offended at the want of consistency among the friends of the administration!

How is it in respect to internal improvements under the authority of the General Government? Here there is a like inconsistency amongst our political opponents. In the South and Southwest, the power to construct roads and canals is most renouously denied; but in the North and West it is almost universally claimed and conceded. It is with one portion of the country a most radical error to attempt the exercise of this authority; whilst in another region it is a part of the constitutional duty of the functionaries here to make large appropriations for this purpose. What a delightful harmony there would be among such gentlemen, if they were in power, and had control of the finances of the country! What discussions we should hear among themselves upon the constitutionality and wisdom of such appropriations! would be the music of the spheres; a concord of sweet sounds. *Their President* would have no difficulty whatever in adopting a line of policy which would receive the unanimous support of all his party.

Another very important subject involved in the political contests of the last three or four years, is the Bank of the United States. What are the sentiments of the opposition with regard to this institution? As variant as the colors of the rainbow. The strict constructionists in the South deny the power of Congress to create such a corporation. Some hold that, if they had the power, it would be expedient to exercise it; and others that it would be an excellent policy to create a bank with proper limitations. Another class believe the power exists, but that its exertion would be dangerous to public liberty; whilst the real “Simon Pure,” though-going Bankites, not only claim the authority, but insist that such a bank is indispensably necessary, as a great balance wheel to regulate the currency, and control the fiscal operations of the country. These are the men who are never weary in the discharge of their duty. They go out day and night, crying, “distress! ruin! bankruptcy! and wretchedness!”—to alarm and terrify a people with supposed dangers, just before them, which are, in fact, never to be realized. No man can receive *their votes* for President, unless they believe he will lend his influence to the establishment of a great National Bank. This is the cry of them, “the very bottom and the soul of the nation.” Which side would prevail in the new administration? Would the Executive be for a

Bank, or against it? No mortal man can solve the problem. Not a man in the opposition will attempt to answer the question.

Again, sir, we are told that the present Executive came into power under pledges to produce important reforms. That “retrenchment and reform” were the motto of the party who elected him; and that the “Reforms” have not been made. Pray, what are the reforms which deserve our attention? Are there any useless offices that ought to be abolished? If so, name them. Does any officer receive too large a compensation? Let us know it. Are there any changes necessary in the organization of the Departments, or in the laws regulating the action of particular bureaus? Point them out. I will go heart and hand with any gentleman, for whatever is proper to be done in regard to these matters, and I dare say there will be a general co-operation on the part of my political friends in so laudable an undertaking. Let gentleman either propose something as proper to be done, let them at least point out the evil, or cease their everlasting clamor about the violation of pledges on our part. How can reforms be made where every thing is already perfect? What surgeon amputates a sound limb? Who administers medicine to a person in the vigor of manhood, and perfectly free from disease? If there be either wound or blemish in the system, let it be made known; and we, who possess the law-making power, should forthwith provide a remedy.

“Proscription” is one of the topics upon which the opposition delight to expatiate. It is of two kinds, according to their account of it: first of public officers, and secondly of the minority as a mass. As to the first, it is said that all are removed who are not of the dominant party; that none can be appointed who are not of the same faith; and that the road to honor and emolument is thus closed up to the minority entirely. A more unfounded charge than this was never made against any party of men since the world began. Why, sir, a majority of the offices in this city, held under the Executive of the United States, are now, and have been for eight years, in the hands of opposition men. Whilst this charge is repeated here from day to day, and reiterated by political partisans from one end of the continent to the other, the opposition clerks are quietly receiving their salaries in the different departments, receiving and holding their respective appointments from the President of the United States and the members of his cabinet!

Is it otherwise in regard to the post offices? I know that in my region of country a large majority of the offices are in the hands of the opposition. I believe it is so throughout the United States, if we take the whole number of offices connected with that Department. So you may find hundreds in the custom-houses of the same political faith, enjoying the favor of this administration. When becomes of the charge then, that no one can hold office but a democrat? It vanishes before the sunlight of truth, leaving not a trace upon the surface where it so lately rested.

The proscription of the minority *en masse*, is a subject I have never been able to comprehend.

How are they proscribed? Do they not enjoy all the rights and immunities guaranteed to other citizens? Have they been disfranchised? What privilege has been taken away? Are not the courts open to them for redress of their grievances? Are not their persons, reputations, and property protected by law, like those of other citizens? If so, of what do they complain? Why, *they cannot get office!*

This brings me to the consideration of the 100,000 office holders, who are said to have been sustaining the administration for some time past, and to have conducted the campaign in favor of Mr. Van Buren. I can remember when I believed there was something in this story about the office holders sustaining Mr. Van Buren, and being his principal supporters. It was asserted in that bold and confident tone which we so frequently listen to here, and I took it for granted gentlemen would not say so *in that manner*, unless it was well established. I have been deceived in that way more than once. Gentlemen rise and tell us that the South will do this, and the North won't do that, in a tone of authority that leads a young man inexperienced in the ways of the Capitol, to believe they are authorized to speak for the whole scope of country indicated in their remarks. It is not so. I am older now, and understand these things. I have been behind the curtain here, which excludes our doings from the eyes of the American people; and when I hear and see these things, I attach just so much weight to them as they deserve. Such asseverations are often made by gentlemen, who, no doubt, believe them to be true, but who know no more about it than I do. Experience has shown that, in more than one instance, they were mistaken.

Gentlemen seem to forget, that besides these offices held under the Federal Government, there are more than a hundred thousand held under the State Governments. Indeed, to make up the number of a hundred thousand under the former, I believe they count the *army and navy* of the United States, and *all the pensioners!* By what authority are they set down as friends of the administration? Who asserts that these men, who receive the sums paid to them under the law, and not by the favor of the Executive, are less free than their fellow-citizens? How are they dependent on the President for support? They are no more so than any other citizen of the country. But suppose what is said of them to be true, we all know that the State, county, city, town, and township officers exercise much more influence over the public mind than they do. Who has most influence over his neighbors, the sheriff of the county, the associate judges, where there are such officers, or a postmaster in some little town? The former, unquestionably. And pray, who holds these offices in all the States, counties, and towns, in which the opposition have the political power? *Their friends*, in almost every instance. In what places do they vote for democrats in preference to men of their own party? In none that have come within the range of my observation. Have they any right to complain, that we prefer our friends to our enemies, (and that is the proscription of which they complain,) when they do

the very same thing themselves? They vote against men, and thus "*proscribe* them for opinion's sake." They will not allow them to hold office; and the only reason assigned is, that *they not like their political opinions.* All parties do this. It is in the nature of man to sustain his friends, and to rally around those who agree with him in sentiment.

We are charged with being influenced by the "SPOILS," and with relying upon them to insure our success. By "spoils" they mean either office or money. In regard to the former, the opposition claim a remarkable share of disinterested patriotism. If we believe their account of it, they have a great aversion to office; and yet when did they ever let a good one pass by, without grasping at it? I can imagine I almost see their "mouths water" sometimes for a taste of the "Treasury pig!"

If it had so happened that Mr. Van Buren had not received quite votes enough to elect him, and the three highest candidates had come before the House for our decision, we should have had great difficulty in arriving at a conclusion. There would have been *no intrigue or bargain*, course! But when all the difficulties had been surmounted, as they no doubt would have been, and an opposition man elected, then we should have seen the beginning of troubles. We would have been the policy of his administration no man living can tell. His supporters would have been of all political creeds and complexions under Heaven; as opposite to each other as the poles, and wholly irreconcilable. He could not have pleased one set of them without displeasing the others; and if he had compromised, and gone sometimes a little with one side and then leaned a little to the other, he would have been doing precisely what they charge upon General Jackson; and would therefore have displeased them all!

But this is not the grand difficulty. We are told that professions and practice ought to go together. Now, the opposition profess to believe that our friends who are in office are unworthy to remain there; so *they would be turned out forthwith.* Again, they profess to have a mortal hatred for office holders; and, of course, *none of them would be willing to fill the vacancies!* He would be one of the greatest calamities that ever befell a free people—*all the offices of the country vacant, and no one to fill them!* One portion of the country would be too bad, and the other too good, to have any thing to do with public office, honor, or emolument!

But upon the subject of money, of mercenary motives and influences, who has shown the strongest inclination to resort to such means to control public sentiment? Who are the friends of bank of the Bank of the United States? Who are willing to sell extraordinary privileges for bonus payable in money? Who are the supporters of land bills and distribution bills? I do not speak of the deposit bill of the last session. That was sustained by a majority of my own political friends; driven to it, in some measure, by the force of circumstances, which they could not fully control; but I allude to a permanent system, I

much money for which the Government has no right to be drawn from the pockets of the people; and, after paying four or five sets of public men to collect it, for legislating upon the subject, and for distributing it again, we return to the same Governments the balance, to be expended in such manner as they may direct. The General Government has no right to do this—it is a *fraud on the people*. The revenue should be cut down so as to meet the wants of the Government, and nothing more; leaving all the fruits of individual industry beyond that in the people's pockets, to be disposed of as each man may think proper. Such is the democratic doctrine; but opposition will not go for this.

The indications have been already given to the country. There is to be a coalition between a section of the South, and the manufacturing interest of the North. The preservation of "the public faith," is to be the pretext for collecting surplus. The "compromise bill" is said to have pledged the public faith! What an absurdity this! Sir, I would regard a violation of the faith of the nation with as much horror as any gentleman in or out of this House. A nation without faith is like an individual whose reputation has been totally destroyed; they are both very properly excluded from all honorable associations. How has public faith been pledged in this case? Can two or three prominent members of Congress make an arrangement, and obtain the passage of a law which is to bind all posterity? Have they any more power than their successors; and, if so, whence did they obtain it? The idea is epistemonian. If they could bind us for ten years, they can do so for fifty or a hundred; and what comes of popular liberty? The "compromise bill" is of no more authority than any other law of Congress, and can be repealed or modified at any time we may think proper. It will be sustained, however, I have no doubt; and an enormous amount of taxes thus levied upon the people to be divided out again; keeping up swarms of unnecessary officers, and enriching one portion of the community at the expense of another. The money is never returned to the men who earned it. Again, it is charged upon this administration, that it has increased the annual expenditures to a large amount. Why do not gentlemen have the honor to tell the people *the cause of this increase*? It is to be found in the increased population, offices, and wants of the Government; in the appropriations for various national objects, fortifications, navy, &c. &c. The removal of the Indian tribes west of the Mississippi, the purchase of their lands, and the wars we have had with them, are some of the principal items. Has there been any unnecessary expenditure? If so, point it out. Let us know what it is; and then we will ask ourselves *why we appropriated the money*.

So of the *corruption*, of which we hear so much. What does it consist? Who has been guilty of it; in what department or bureau is it to be found? what is its character? General charges are easily made; but they are too indefinite. Let gentlemen assume the responsibility of making a distinct charge. In private life, if one man instigates a prosecution against another for an offence, and it

turns out upon investigation that there is no foundation for it, and not even a probable cause for its commencement, the prosecutor is liable to an action of damages for the injury done to individual reputation. Are the characters of public men less valuable to them than those of private citizens? Are they not equally under the protection of the law? True, the prosecutor here might not be liable to an action; but if there should turn out to be neither ground for the charge, nor good reason for instituting the inquiry, *public sentiment* would render that justice to all concerned, that is administered, in the other case, by the judiciary of the country.

If any gentleman will rise in his place, and state that he has good reason to believe, from information upon which he can rely, that fraud and corruption do exist in a particular department, either naming his informant or stating that it is improper to name him, I for one will vote for a committee, with ample powers to make a thorough investigation. If one committee is not enough, I will vote for more—for as many as are necessary—to develop the true condition of the public offices, and to expose all the defaulters who may be found in them. This, I think, ought to satisfy the most fastidious.

This House has been assailed. It has been denominated a mere "bed of justice to register the decrees of royalty!" It seems that we sit here, without any opinions of our own, merely to register the edicts of the President! What is the pretext for this charge? Why, forsooth, we agree in sentiment with the President, and therefore sustain his measures! Was ever argument more futile? Who elected the President? The people. Who elected the members of this House? The same people. Do they not vote for both, because *they approve of their political opinions*? Undoubtedly. Are not the President and the majority of the members of this House of the same political party? Is it strange that they should agree in regard to great leading measures of policy? Who would anticipate any thing else than an agreement? I desire to speak respectfully of arguments advanced here, and will therefore not say that this is childish, but really it is one of the strangest specimens of parliamentary logic that I have ever heard.

Pray, who rules the opposition? Whose edicts do they register? Do they sit here to register the edicts of a distinguished gentleman from Kentucky, of another from Massachusetts, and of a third from South Carolina? If not, how does it happen that they agree so cordially and entirely with *the three great leaders* in all their political opinions? The fact cannot be denied, that this agreement does exist; and if the argument is good with respect to us, it *applies equally to the opposition*. If we are the President's "slaves," they are "slaves" to the opposition leaders.

The President, it is said, is popular; that he rules the country and guides public sentiment by the aid of this personal popularity. What a most lame and impotent conclusion! True, he is popular; but it is because he deserves to be so, from his eminent talents, his democratic principles, and his faithful and extraordinary public services. If other

gentlemen wish to be popular, let them pursue his footsteps, adopt his principles, and render such services, and then they will attain the object of their wishes. The people of this country have but one desire in regard to public affairs; it is, to see *their Government well administered*. They elected Andrew Jackson because they believed he would thus administer the Government, and they have not been disappointed.

Who is it that complains of him? They are the men who told us in 1824 and in 1828, that if Jackson succeeded, the country would be ruined; the men who told us the same thing in 1832; men who invoked war, pestilence, and famine, rather than devotion to military glory; but who, during the late campaign, huzzied for military chieftains louder than ever we did at any period. They are now endeavoring to convince us that they were right; *that we have been ruined*; and that all their predictions have been verified. Do they think we will believe their declamation in opposition to the evidence of our own senses? When was this country ever more happy and prosperous than at this moment? Never since the Government was first organized. The laboring classes of community—the farmer, the planter, the mechanic, the manufacturer, are all growing rich. Land and all its products, bear a higher price than they have for many years; yet gentlemen will have it that we are ruined. The laws protect every man in the enjoyment of all his rights, personal liberty, personal security, and private property; in all his immunities and privileges, religious, civil, and political; still gentlemen insist that we are ruined. Sir, the people will not believe them. When they feel themselves happy at home, and learn from every intelligent American, of every party, that our country now stands higher abroad, on account of the manner in which our intercourse has been conducted by this administration with foreign nations, (France included,) than it ever did in any former period, they will not believe any man who asserts that they have been injured by those who have held the reins of power for the last eight years.

[Here Mr. H. gave way to Mr. Anthony, on whose motion the House adjourned. The subject did not come up again until the following Tuesday, when Mr. H. concluded his remarks as follows.]

Before I resume the thread of my discourse, I must submit a few observations with regard to what fell from me the other day, when I addressed the House. I know how easy it is for what is said here to be misunderstood and misrepresented; and it appears that my positions have been greatly misunderstood by some who heard me.

It is said that I demanded specific charges of fraud before I would vote for a committee of inquiry. Not so, sir: I require some gentleman to assume the responsibility of pointing to the department, bureau, or officer, where the fraud is to be found and of asserting in his place, that he has good reasons for believing it exists. Then I will vote promptly for an investigation.

So I have been understood to say, that those now in power are *not a party*. I said no such thing. The country is divided into parties and perhaps always will be; and one of those parties is

now in power. What I complain of is, that opposition, who are in a minority, and have been for years, should arrogantly claim that *they are Country*, and we but *a Party*. I insist that if party can be called "*the Country*," it is ours; in a free country, the voice of the majority is *visibly* the voice of the country.

Again, sir, I stated that I had been behind curtain since I came here, and had been undecided with regard to many operations of public men. I directly referred to this House, and to schemes and plans concocted and carried into execution by those who oppose the administration. I spoke of the curtain which conceals us from scrutiny of the people who are at home, and we are often imposed upon most shamefully by what is put forth from this "ten miles square." For example, how often do we see an account given by a letter writer of the speeches made here which is a tissue of misrepresentation from beginning to end. A friend of the administration perhaps and makes a speech. That is put down as a feeble effort; contradictory, illogical, and that. Then an opposition gentleman arose, and literally slayed the other alive. Poor fellow, looked as if he would sink through the floor. I writer almost fancied he could hear him groan audibly, such was the agony he felt and manifested. Now those of us who are here "behind the curtain" understand all this; and the people at home are beginning to understand it too, though for a long time they did not. We know that these men are paid to abuse one side and praise the other, that they are merely laboring in their vocation.

It has been alleged that I justified the President's inconsistency, by charging like conduct upon his opponents. I did not undertake to argue that point at all; but I take occasion now to declare that the inconsistencies charged upon him do exist in point of fact.

So of the proscription and patronage which furnish themes of endless declamation, I am understood to justify the one, and to disregard the other, because of the existence of the same things in the States where the opposition have the power.

[Here Mr. PICKENS rose and inquired if Mr. H. meant to include South Carolina? to which Mr. H. replied in the affirmative. Mr. P. stated that the gentleman's information was incorrect for the dominant party there had not proscribed and removed their political opponents. Mr. H. made a similar statement in regard to Massachusetts.] Mr. H. then proceeded:

I am glad to hear that our opponents are liberal in South Carolina and Massachusetts. But the gentlemen have not given to the term *proscription* the same meaning that I do. It means, plain English, as I understand it, a preference of our friends to our enemies. This preference exists in all parties, and is right in itself. Qualifications being equal, or nearly so, I would always prefer my friend to my political antagonist. No party has ever shown a more rigid adherence to this principle, than the various parties opposed to the administration; and I believe it is so in both South Carolina and Massachusetts. We see very few Jackson men in Congress from either of those

es, and that alone proves what I say. Removal cannot take place where there is nobody to remove; and I presume there were but few of them in office in either State.

As to removals from office, it is enough for me to repeat, that the charges against the Executive are not sustained by the facts; and I appeal to the departments in this city, and to the post offices throughout the Union, to prove the unjustness of the statement, that *men are removed merely on account of their political sentiments*.

When we show that the opposition prefer men to their own party to others, we may then fairly properly ask, what would the people gain at this point, by turning out the dominant party and putting in their opponents? When the speaker chides blackness, is it not fair to point to the color of his own pumage? If "Satan undertakes to reprove sin," is it not well to remind him, that his own moral character does not stand very high in the community? And if politicians make charges against their opponents, may we not remind them, that they are guilty of the very thing themselves, which *they charge upon* others?

Having said thus much in explanation, I will proceed with my discourse. When we addressed the other day, I was remarking that the President had approved of the conduct of the present Executive. The late elections prove that to be all dispute. A successor has been selected by a large majority, who has been associated with the Executive for many years; who approves of leading measures, and is pledged to carry out his policy. The gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Calhoun,) who I regret to see is not in his seat, particularly as I understand he is detained from it by the illness of his family, told us the other day that he was advocating the cause of the people, and did not wish to be understood as assailing the President. That gentleman and several others have been advocating the cause of the people in the same way for years; yet, whenever the people come to the polls, they uniformly decide against their own advocates, and in favor of Andrew Jackson! This proves their approbation of his principles and policy.

It does not stand here to eulogize the President, but to say this much I will say: when the passions which enter into party conflicts in this country have subsided—when the prejudices created by such controversies shall have passed away, and not till then, will justice be done to the man and character of Andrew Jackson. And when his enemies shall have floated down the stream of time into that oblivion which is the inevitable destiny of almost their whole number, his memory will survive and flourish in the hearts of a grateful, and an intelligent people.

The history of America up to this period, will present three Presidents standing out boldly upon the pages as great public benefactors. They are George Washington, who harmonized the conflicting elements and put our Government in motion; Thomas Jefferson, who arrested it in its downhill career towards monarchy, and restored it to its pristine purity; and Andrew Jackson, who brought it the "republican tack," brought it back

to the point where Jefferson left it, and where it ought always to remain.

I come now to speak of the future. It has been boldly proclaimed here by several gentlemen, that, in regard to the administration of Mr. Van Buren, we are to have "*war in advance*," and "*war to the knife*!" This is a most extraordinary position for gentlemen to assume. Before the principles or policy of the Chief Magistrate are made known, nay, before he has taken the oath of office, to declare war; and that, too, a war of extermination! They inform us that he is not to be judged by his acts; that they may possibly support *his measures*, but they will wage an interminable warfare against *the man*! Why, sir, *we go for measures*, and *men* to carry them out; *we support men*, because they are in favor of certain doctrines and measures, not because we like the man. Any other system than this must degenerate into mere "man worship."

This may be a very patriotic opposition; but it appears to me to be an impolitic one for the gentlemen themselves. When one man is determined beforehand to be displeased, or to quarrel with another, we know how easy it is to find an opportunity of doing so. Now if it should so happen, in the progress of events, that these gentlemen find it necessary at some future time to make an assault upon the administration, will not the people be inclined to reply: "Ah! we did not expect *you* to be satisfied, for you were determined to be displeased, let the President do as he might." But the course which gentlemen choose to pursue is somewhat a matter of taste; and I have not the least desire to dictate to any one upon this subject.

If the opposition have solemnly resolved that we shall have another four years' war; if they will agree to no cessation of hostilities; if we cannot be permitted even to go into winter quarters for three months; if war, and war to the knife is to be their motto,—for one, I say,—"*Come on, Mac-duff*!" Let us hear the roar of your cannon gentlemen. Show us the size of your balls; the length and diameter of your calibres. Let us hear the trampling of the horses' hoofs; the neighing of the steeds, and the clangor of your trumpets. Do not annoy us by the random shots of single riflemen, from behind the scattering trees; nor by the flanking and scouting parties that belong to your army; but charge with all your forces. Danger is always increased, in appearance, by the distance. The enemy presents a much more terrifying aspect when he first bursts upon the view, than when you grapple with him, man to man, and test the power of his muscle and the fierceness of his spirit. Give us a general fire, along your whole line. The suspense which precedes a great battle is the most dreadful period of the whole affair. I am told, that even cowards will fight after the first discharge; and I promise you, that all of us who survive the first shock, will stand up and give you a fair fight in the open plain.

The reason assigned for making war upon Mr. Van Buren is, that he is a USURPER! Yes sir, although elected by the people of the United States, he is a usurper. Language is changing its meaning now-a-days, and we shall soon be unable to understand each other. Let us look into this charge.

We all know there were many persons in the democratic party who did not prefer Mr. Van Buren to all others, as the successor of General Jackson. Some of us preferred Judge McLean; some were for Colonel Benton; others were for Judge White, and many were in favor of the honorable gentleman from Kentucky, (Colonel Johnson.) He was not my first choice. Thousands of us in Ohio preferred a distinguished citizen of our own State. We knew him personally; we had seen the zeal, industry, and ability displayed by him in the management of an important Department of the Government, and in the discharge of every duty devolving upon him in the various stations he had held, both under the State and Federal authorities. We believed he would make an excellent Chief Magistrate; whilst, on the other hand, some of us had been induced to believe that, although Mr. Van Buren possessed great abilities and experience, still he was an intriguing politician. We believed so, because we heard these things said, day after day, for years, and scarcely ever heard a word said in his defence. How could any one expect us, under such circumstances, to come to a favorable conclusion in regard to him. I must here beg pardon of the House for speaking particularly of myself. When I was first elected to Congress, I was elected as a McLean man. Myself and one of my colleagues were well known, both at home and at this place, to be favorable to the Judge; whilst the other friends of the administration from Ohio were either for Mr. Van Buren, or uncommitted.

During the first session we were here, a convention of the Jackson party was held, at which they nominated Mr. Van Buren for President; thus crowding Judge McLean off the track in Ohio. It was a matter of public notoriety among those who took any interest in my opinions, that, judging from the information I received with regard to this proceeding, the manner of getting up and conducting the convention, I at that time disapproved it, though subsequent information changed my opinions. I wrote three letters expressive of my disapprobation—*private, confidential letters*, so marked upon their face. Two were written to a gentleman long since deceased; and the other to an individual still living. Both these persons were Jackson McLean men, and my personal friends. During the campaign last fall, these letters, with the word "*private*," and the names of the correspondents erased, and with what other alterations—if any—I know not, appeared in the public newspapers. The living correspondent denied having any thing to do with the publication and the family of the deceased had no participation in it. A few "*whigs*," with two or three *professed* Van Buren men, I am told, superintended the publication. I do not charge it upon the opposition as a party, for I take pleasure in saying, that however wrong I may think them in their politics, there are thousands of them who are high-minded, honorable men; men who would suffer their right arms to be severed from their shoulders, rather than descend to a mean or dishonorable action. But the men of any party who would violate the secrecy of a confidential correspondence, who would procure the private communications passing between personal and political friends, and expose

their contents to the world without the consent of the parties, are unworthy of the society of gentlemen any where, and deserve the scorn and indignation of every honest man in the community.

These letters were published to prove my consistency, in having once been favorable to Judge McLean, and being now for Mr. Van Buren; the charge was made by individuals of the Jackson party, who acknowledged that Gen. Harrison was not their first choice; but they supported *because he was taken up by their party!* I preferred Mr. Clay or Mr. Webster; but their friends settled down upon the Hero of peccanoe, they went for him.

The friends of Judge McLean, who belong to the democratic party, adhered to him as long as there was any prospect of his being run by the party. When that failed, and he withdrew the canvass, to prevent the possibility of bringing the election of President into this House, they, generally, went over to Mr. Van Buren.

[Here Mr. VINTON rose and requested leave to ask Mr. H. a question. Mr. H. "Certainly." V. "Will my colleague say, whether he did go over to Mr. Van Buren before Judge McLean declined?" Mr. H. "I will answer my colleague with pleasure. When first elected, my constituents knew I was a McLean man. Previous to the second election I published a card, stating whatever might be my individual preference whenever my party united generally upon a candidate, I should go with them. With this information before them, the people elected me, and I have faithfully kept my promise to the people. That election was, I believe, before the Judge formally declined being a candidate. So, for my own individual affairs.]

The next step taken by the opposition to the Vice President popular with his own party was the daily abuse they bestowed upon him during the "*panic session*." They connected "*Jackson, Van Buren, and the party*" together, to make up a triumvirate. This naturally excited kind feelings towards him among those who were abused in common with the President and himself; in this manner, he made him thousands of friends, and he was finally adopted as the candidate of the democratic party.

But gentlemen tell us that the President nominated him as his successor, and that *to this nation* he owes his election! I should be glad to know when, where, and under what circumstances, this nomination was made.

[Mr. PERRYON arose, and said he could tell the gentleman from Ohio, and would do so then, if he desired it; or would do it after he got through, whichever he pleased. Mr. HAMER remarked that it would be better, perhaps, for Mr. PERRYON to give his sentiments after he had closed.]

I presume, sir, (said Mr. H.) the gentleman from Tennessee refers to the Gwin letter, whereby the President in defence of some charge against him in a Nashville paper. It is some time since I saw that letter; but such is the tenor of my recollection.

[Mr. PERRYON again arose, and made some remarks respecting this letter, contending that the article in the Nashville paper was not an attack upon General Jackson, but that it had been

text for writing the letter, which denounced body in advance who would not support [an Buren.]

It proceeded. Let the nature of the article what it might, one thing is certain—the was neither in form nor in substance, a "novation" of Mr. Van Buren. It advised and harmony in the party, and spoke falsely of the proposed convention at Baltimore. Suppose the President was favorable to him, where any thing wrong in this? Does a Chief magistrate lose the freedom of thought by his position to that office? This would be a new doctrine in our country. It is not unnatural that he should be favorable to Mr. Van Buren. He knew well. The latter had been associated with Van Buren in the administration of the Government. They agreed in opinion with respect to all leading measures of the administration, and Van Buren was pledged, if elected, to carry out, and pursue the policy of Gen. Jackson. To such a candidate he could not well be opposed; but how did this influence the election? Was the President's influence effectually exerted in favor of his successor? Not in Tennessee, for that State went against him. If there was one State in the Union which could be influenced by him, it must be Tennessee; and yet that State voted for Judge White! Where, then, is the evidence of this "appointment of his successor," so lightly charged upon all concerned? None but in the imagination of those who have repeated it so often, that I dare say they begin to believe it themselves. Suppose the President had voted for Judge White or for General Harrison? Would there have been any complaints then? Not a word. They would have said: "Well, the President has got his eyes open at last to the true character of Mr. Van Buren; he can be deceived no longer; he has detected the imposition and, with characteristic independence, the noble old General has come out openly against him." He would have been "glorified" from one end of the continent to the other, by those who now abuse him. The Baltimore convention nominated the Vice President, and made him the candidate of our party; too is a grievous offence; and smacks of dictation too strongly to please the opposition. Pray, first resorted to national conventions for such purposes? Who held the conventions at Baltimore that nominated Mr. Clay and Mr. Wirt, in the campaign of 1832? Who held the Young Men's National Convention in this District, in the same year? We all know it was the Whigs and Antimasons. Yet these are the men who now rebuke us in unmeasured terms, for merely following their example.

At his locality greatly displeases some gentlemen, and they have abused New York in almost every debate that has occurred here for the last twenty years; and she is treated in the same manner by their newspapers. And why may not New York have the honor of giving us a President? The South has given us four; New England has furnished two, and the West one; whilst New York, Pennsylvania, two great States, occupying a central position in the confederacy, each of them at least within itself, have never furnished us one. What has New York done, that she is to be pro-

scribed? Has she not signalized herself by a devotion to liberty, and an attachment to democratic principles, in all the great emergencies which the country has seen?

Where was she in the revolutionary war? Battling among the foremost for independence. What was her position in the great political revolution that brought Mr. Jefferson into power? She stood side by side with her democratic sisters, struggling for the rights of the States against federal usurpation and monarchical principles. And in the war of 1812, where was she found? Sustaining the cause of the country as efficiently as any State in the Union, and holding at bay the Hartford Convention party, who were not permitted to cross her territory into the middle and southern States. If this State has a distinguished son, worthy of the Chief Magistracy, why may he not be presented as a candidate for the suffrages of the people of the United States? So far from there being any thing wrong in it, there was a peculiar propriety, under all the circumstances, in taking the candidate from New York at the recent election.

Mr. Van Buren was thus made a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. He encountered an opposition, combining more talent, with less scrupulousness in regard to the means employed to defeat him, than were ever met before by any successful candidate for the same office. Their untiring exertions induced thousands of good men, and sound patriots to vote against him, who were utterly misled with respect to his true character.

In some places he was denounced as a Catholic, for the purpose of inducing Protestants to vote against him. Many did so, in every State in the Union, believing that, if he succeeded, there would be a league formed between him and the Pope, and our religious liberties would be prostrated for ever. Yet every intelligent man, of every party, knew this charge to be utterly false.

To the open, honest, straight forward voter, he was denounced as a political intriguer. We all know how easily this charge is made—how strongly inclined the people are to believe it when made against public men, and how difficult it is to disprove it in any case. During the late campaign, his friends have roundly denied the charge, and demanded the proof. What answer has been given? Why, that "*he is so smooth and so sly in his operations, that you cannot catch him at it!*" Ah, and pray how was it ever discovered in the first instance, if he leaves no traces behind him?

At the South he was declared to be an abolitionist; and the people were persuaded, that if he succeeded, the constitutional guaranties for their domestic institutions, peculiar to that region, would be all broken down. In the North he was abused for being opposed to the abolitionists; an enemy to the freedom of speech and of the press, and in favor of slavery. Such was the hostility to him in that quarter, that nineteen out of every twenty, and perhaps ninety-nine out of every hundred, abolitionists in the United States voted against him. This was to be expected; for all who have taken the pains to ascertain his sentiments, know that he is opposed to the doctrines

and practices of the modern abolition party, in every shape and form.

In one place he was alleged to be in favor of giving all negroes the right of suffrage; and, in another region, he was censured for being an enemy to the poor, and against allowing them the privilege of voting for public officers. Both charges were without foundation in fact. By the same men he was declared to be a federalist, and an opposer of the war of 1812, when the history of that period proves him to have been a member of the Legislature of New York, and one of the most efficient friends of the war that then figured in public life.

In some places his talents were denied, although but a few years back, the same men charged him with writing all Gen. Jackson's messages, and frankly admitted that they were drawn up *with great ability*.

It would be a Herculean task to enumerate all the falsehoods propagated, and impositions practiced, to accomplish his defeat. They all failed. Notwithstanding the people were appealed to in pathetic terms to come to the rescue; were assured that they would be ruined if they elected him; still they marched to the polls and gave him their votes. The people had been twice ruined by electing Gen. Jackson; and as they found it rather an agreeable operation, they concluded to try it the third time, and let Mr. Van Buren ruin them again.

He has been elected by the unbought suffrages of his fellow-citizens, and in a most remarkable manner. The vote received by him is diffused throughout the Union, so as to prove most clearly that nothing like a *geographical division of parties* exists in the country. All the efforts made towards that point have been unsuccessful. Including Michigan, he has received the votes of fifteen States out of twenty-six. He obtained the votes of a majority of the old thirteen States, and a majority of those of the new States. He has a majority of the electoral votes of the slaveholding, and a majority of those of the non-slaveholding States of the Union. He has one hundred and seventy electoral votes, being a majority of forty-six over all his competitors put together; and he has a majority of all the individual votes of the people of the United States of from ten to twenty thousand. The exact number cannot be ascertained, because in South Carolina the people do not vote; the Legislature appoint the electors of President. Without this State, Mr. Van Buren has a majority of about twenty-two thousand, according to the calculation of the opposition newspapers themselves. But to make him out a "usurper," a "minority President," they count South Carolina as forty thousand—the whole number being set down against Mr. Van Buren, and none for him. Now, the Union party of that State compose from a third to one half of its population, and they are openly for him, and would have so given their votes, if permitted by the State Government to go to the polls and vote directly for President. If, then, the State can give forty thousand votes, fifteen thousand at least, and perhaps twenty thousand, would have been for Mr. Van Buren, for many nullifiers would have voted for him, I have

no doubt, in preference to any other candidate before them. Allowing him but fifteen thousand there would be a majority of ten thousand for him in the State. Deduct this from the two thousand majority he has in the other States, and he has still a clear majority of the individual votes of the Union of at least twelve thousand.

He is elected according to all the forms of the constitution, and by these large State, electoral and individual majorities; and yet gentlemen call him a "USURPER!" No: he is the constitutional lawful President; and from the fourth of next, all men will be bound to obey him as within the pale assigned to him by the institutions of his country.

Suppose Mr. Van Buren had received one less than enough to elect him, and the question had come before this House? In that event, General Harrison, with seventy-three, or Judge Vane, with twenty-six votes, might have been elected. Such a result was by no means impossible. The distinguished gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Harlan) stated upon this floor, in a debate which occurred here last session, that the member who held the seat in the contested election from North Carolina might possibly give the casting vote for President should the question come before us. In such States, no one can tell what the result would be. If one of the gentlemen named had been successful, and we had risen and denounced him a USURPER, and declared war upon him in advance, because he was a *minority President*, astonishment would have been expressed by the opposition! What lectures would have been delivered upon constitutional law and obligation! The motto would then have been, "judge him by his acts." But now, when our candidate is elected by a majority of the independent vote of the Union, he is a USURPER, because *General Jackson was for him*, or because the opposition dislike "the man!"

But if the war is to be commenced immediately under whose banner do gentlemen propose to fight? Who is the candidate of the several parties opposed to the coming administration? Is it Judge Manly with the eleven votes of South Carolina to rely upon? Who ever thought of him for President until that State voted for him the other day? Is it Mr. Webster, with the fourteen votes of Massachusetts; or Judge White, with the twenty-six votes of Tennessee and Georgia? Why, sir, I mean disrespect to either of these gentlemen; but with such a capital as either of them has, we should say in the Western phrase, "*it would be rather dull chance!*" Shall we have a distinguished gentleman from Kentucky, who was not a candidate in the late campaign? We have beaten him three times already, and *we can do it again* whenever his friends choose to bring him forward. Shall we have the Hero of Tippecanoe upon the track once more? the worthy gentleman who at the head of the Clay electoral ticket of 1824, and who three years ago, in a public speech declared that the surplus revenue ought to be applied to the purchase of slaves in the Southern States, for the purpose of colonization? Of course, adopted the doctrines of the great, "*African System*;" he is a politician of that school.

too, that the taxes levied upon the South above what are needed by the Government, are expended in buying up their slaves; or in words, *he would tax them to obtain money to pay for their own property!* Will the South admit that doctrine?

What are to be the opinions and sentiments of the people, whoever he may be, upon whom the *little parties* can unite? Who are to be his advisers? They are the nullifiers, the antislavery abolitionists, the black cockade federalists and their regular successors who hold the same principles; and the honest, but misguided statesmen, who are led away by the acts and opinions of these various parties. What a prospect would this be to put on board the old ship of State? Suppose their President were elected, how would it be possible for him to govern himself? I take it for granted his cabinet would be made up of distinguished men, chosen from the different fragments of his party; he would be supported, he must consult the wishes of his friends in the selection of important officers, and the recommendation of public measures. It has been said that a President elected by this party would have been brought to terms, in respect to public policy. True, if you could have argued among yourselves upon *what the terms* would be! But let that pass. Imagine you see the President, at the "White House," preparing to send in his first annual message to Congress with his cabinet around him. The message is carefully read through, and each member is expected to give his opinion freely with respect

to the first one who speaks is a thoroughgoing federalist, who believes the Government cannot manage its fiscal concerns without a "mammoth" bank. He insists that there shall be a positive recommendation of a national bank, and refuses to give any objection to the document, because there is a paragraph in it. This brings to his feet a strict constructionist, who denies the authority of Congress to legislate on the subject, and declares his utter abhorrence for any opposition; declaring, furthermore, that it will break down the administration to avow this point. The nullifier gives his opinion that there is a strong inclination, in two or three places, to "centralism;" that these passages must be deleted, and a few remarks added on the subject of "concurrent majorities." To this the federalist strenuously objects, and insists that the great force is much the most powerful in the public; the great danger being, that *the will fly off from the common centre.*

Next comes the antislavery man, who says the message is altogether defective. "You must give us *Free-Flow-Fun* in it." "Say something about the outrages committed upon the person of William Morgan; and give them a touch of extra judicial oaths, and secret societies, and the overthrow of our liberties." "That is very well," says the abolitionist; "but I never give the message my sanction, unless it contains something in favor of *'human rights,' 'equality,'* and *'the great danger of national judgments, on account of our national sins!'*"

What would the Executive Chief do in this state of perplexity? Would he gratify all? What a pretty piece of patchwork! What a dignified, elevated, and able State paper, his message would be! Would he reject a part of the propositions, and adopt the remainder? Which individuals would he follow? Who would be the favorites? No man on earth can tell any thing about it. The people saw this; they perceived that, to follow the opposition, was like taking a leap in the dark—whilst, in voting for Mr. Van Buren, they were walking in the light of open day. They knew his principles, and could foresee the policy of his administration; and they very wisely preferred him over all his political competitors.

Against whom is this war to be waged with such fury? It is against the democratic party, with *Martin Van Buren at its head.* Gentlemen may sneer at this, if they choose; but it is so. Men may call themselves what they please, but there is one infallible mode, and *one only*, of deciding to what party an individual belongs. A federalist may call himself a democrat, and a democrat may claim to be a federalist; but ask for his *principles*, for his *political creed*, and then you can soon determine to what party he is really attached. Try us by this rule, and it will be found that we are the democratic party, "*par excellence*," if gentlemen choose to apply the term.

In this country, Thomas Jefferson is now universally acknowledged to have been the great "Apostle of Democracy." Whatever party of this day comes nearest to his principles is the Democratic party; let others call themselves what they may. What were his principles? He was against the Bank of the United States. So are we. He was opposed to a high tariff; collecting from the people large sums of money, annually, which are not wanted for any of the legitimate purposes of Government. So are we. He was against the construction of works of internal improvement, under the authority of the General Government, chequering the whole country with roads and canals, made by the funds drawn from the industry of the nation. So are the friends of the present Administration. He believed, that Senators and Representatives were bound to obey the instructions of their constituents; or to resign their places and allow others to take them who would. So do we. Look at the evidences exhibited within the last few years of the truth of this position; whilst the opposition have generally disregarded instructions, and boldly retained their offices, in defiance of the public will.

Upon all the cardinal points and doctrines of the old democratic party of 1800, we of the present dominant party are agreed. There is a unity of sentiment among us in regard to these principles, which proves, conclusively, that we are the democracy of the country. The opposition have no common creed; but so far as their general principles are concerned, we find them constantly making war upon them in practice.

The means employed in this war will be similar to those always employed against the democratic party; and such as have signalized the opposition for some years past. They arrogate to themselves "all the talents" of the country, particularly in

both Houses of Congress; and their puffers and letter writers aid them to make that impression upon the public mind. Every prominent man upon our side is denounced as greatly deficient, either in talents, or in political honesty: he is either knave or fool. "Demagogue" is the common appellation applied to all who advocate popular rights and popular doctrines.

"All the religion and morality" are claimed to be on the side of the opposition; and it is evidenced by that portion of them who weep and wail over "poor Indians" and "poor Negroes!" The "decency," too, all belongs to them. Witness the poetry upon "dusky Sally," published against Mr. Jefferson; the coffin handbills circulated against Gen. Jackson, and the violent and abusive harangues and publications against almost all the prominent men of our party.

The newspapers on our side are universally denounced as unworthy of confidence, whilst their own, even the most abandoned and profligate, are held up as prodigies of truth and patriotism. And last, though not least, they resort to various schemes for buying up the people *with their own money!* No plan will be left untried upon this subject. A distribution of land or of its proceeds; a deposit or distribution law to be passed annually; or any other plan which will effect the object, will be resorted to. This policy leads the people, when the election is approaching, to inquire, "which candidate is in favor of giving us money," or, "who will get the most money for us?" In this contest about money, *principle* will be overlooked; and we shall be governed by the most low, grovelling, and mercenary motives which ever control the human mind.

The North and the South, the East and the West, have been invoked to join in this crusade against the new administration. The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Pickens) called upon the south to come to the rescue; and confidently predicted that Massachusetts, and the country on both sides of the Ohio, would aid in the prostration of Mr. Van Buren. Sir, the gentleman will find himself in a like condition, with a celebrated character in English history, who could "call spirits from the vasty deep;" but, unfortunately, *they would not come* when he called them. The people of these United States are a just people, and they are disposed to bestow upon every man the reward which his conduct has merited. They will not condemn a public officer until he has done something worthy of condemnation. I know that politicians sometimes act otherwise. That "ill-weav'd ambition," which prompts men to rash and dangerous experiments, may induce a public man to condemn, without a hearing; but private citizens will hear before they strike.

As many gentlemen have recently ventured to prophesy in regard to future events, I will follow the example. I hope, however, to be more successful than the opposition have been for the last eight or ten years. My prediction is, that the next administration will pursue a calm, prudent, and wise policy, both at home and abroad. That it will bear about the same relation to General Jackson's, that Mr. Madison's did to Mr. Jefferson's administration, with the exception that

there will be no national bank chartered. And Mr. Van Buren should be a candidate for reelection, he will get all the States he did at the election, and the votes of Georgia, Ohio, Indiana, and I believe Tennessee in addition. The country will proceed in its career of prosperity; the close of his administration will see him one of the most popular Presidents that has ever occupied the Executive Chair of this great Republic.

With regard to the resolution now before the House, I have but little to say. I am in favor of a thorough examination of any department, and there is reason to believe that either fraud, or dishonesty exists. Let there be evidence to warrant the House in adopting the resolution; some definite charge, some definite statement, to warrant the procedure; and I go as far as any gentleman to ferret out the fraud and drag the culprits to light. But I do not like the language of the original resolution. It is, in general, too sweeping in its phraseology. It includes *all* the transactions of *all* men with the departments, whether direct or indirect, official or unofficial. The contracts and dealings of a private citizen, who has ever had any thing to do with any department of the Government, must thus be subjected to the inspection of a committee of this House. It is to that I object.

Still, sir, I do not know but I shall vote for it, if I cannot get it altered. I have not before voted for such propositions; but, after that has been said by the opposition, I think it is due to the President, to ourselves, and to the coming administration, that we should throw open the doors, and let these gentlemen examine the corruption, about which so much has been said. It is due to the President, whose term of service is drawing to a close, that the condition of the departments be made known to the country, if fraud be found there, that the innocent may be justified, and the guilty punished. It is due to ourselves, because we have been indirectly charged with a desire to smother and conceal a mal-administration of public affairs. And it is due to the President elect, that we should deliver the Executive Departments into his hands thoroughly purified from all iniquity, so as to make him responsible only for the misdeeds of his own substitutes, committed whilst he is in power. For these reasons I shall vote for a strict and general scrutiny, such as shall be satisfactory to all reasonable men, of every political party.

One word, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, with respect to this kind of discussion in which we are now engaged. No one dislikes it more than I. What I have said has been absolutely provoked by the course which gentlemen on the other side of the House have pursued. I have listened to their attacks upon the administration, and upon my friends, for a long time, in hopes that some of more age and experience, and of greater ability, would meet these assaults, and repel them as they deserved. No one did so, and I considered it my duty to assume the position I have taken. I am aware that I have subjected myself to violent attacks here and elsewhere. I surveyed the whole ground before I commenced, and having com-

conclusion that it was my duty to take the
I am not the man to be deterred by conse-
quences.

I have endeavored throughout the discussion to
be myself within the rules prescribed by par-
liamentary law. I have avoided all personalities,
speaking at masses of men, their movements and

principles. These I consider fair game. If I
have done injustice to any individual, I shall be
ready to make such explanations as the circum-
stances may require; but to what I have said of
parties, their conduct and principles, I shall firmly
adhere, until convinced that I have been mis-
taken.

